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BEULAH, THE DAIRY COW, DISCUSSES THE FEED SHORTAGE

A transcribed interview between John Baker, Chief of the Radio Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture and Beulah, A Dairy Cow. Recorded May 2, 1946.
Time without announcer's parts, 7 minutes, 18 seconds.

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TRANSCRIPTION:

SOUND: FADE IN TINKLE OF COW BELL: LIGHT TINKLE AT INTERVALS THOUGHOUT--JUST ENOUGH TO REMIND

BAKER: Hello, Beulah.

BEULAH: (CRUSTY, KIND OLD SOUL: FEMININE) Hello, Boy! Land, sakes . . .
You haven't been around much lately . . .

BAKER: No . . . they've been keeping me pretty busy.

BEULAH: Bet you're after some extra butter.

BAKER: (LAUGH) Now . . . Beulah . . .

BEULAH: Well, the answer's NO. Can't take care of all the people on my list now . . . and too, there's a feed shortage, you know . . .

BAKER: I know. And that's just what brought me around. I got to wondering how a dairy cow herself looked at this feed situation . . . what her ideas might be on how to squeeze through it.

BEULAH: It'll take some doing . . . I can tell you that. And people keep yelping for more and more milk all the time . . . you'd think all we cows had to do was turn a spigot . . .

BAKER: They're certainly lapping up the milk all right, these days . . .

BEULAH: We're doing our best . . . and of course we cows want those boys who've come home from overseas . . . bless their hearts . . . to have all the milk they can drink. And we want to send what dairy stuff we can to those little foreign kids that need nourishing food so bad.

BAKER: You big-hearted Old Dear . . .

BEULAH: (BRUSQUE BUT PLEASED) Oh . . . go on with you, Boy. It's our job . . .

BAKER: Yes'm. Now, Beulah, how is the feed shortage affecting you? At the moment, you certainly seem to be doing all right in this lush, green pasture.

BEULAH: Isn't this something!

BAKER: It certainly is . . .

BEULAH: I've been grazing out here every day now for several weeks. Spring came early this year . . .

BAKER: That was a break, wasn't it?

BEULAH: A wonderful break. When I get to the barn, I don't have to have anything like as much grain feed for supper. Yet I'm milking better than ever . . . 11 quarts yesterday . . .

BAKER: Marvelous, Beulah . . .

BEULAH: And with all the caroteen from this nice tender green alfalfa, the Vitamin A in my milk and butter these days is really something.

BAKER: (LAUGH) Bless my buttons, Beulah . . . you really keep up with things, don't you.

BEULAH: I try to . . .

BAKER: Beulah, the Scientific Dairy Cow . . .

BEULAH: Well . . . milk's my career, Boy.

BAKER: Sure, sure. But this scientific stuff about the more green feed a cow eats, the more milk she'll give and the higher the Vitamin-A value will be . . . that's still new stuff to a lot of people.

BEULAH: (SNIFFS) People! People are awfully slow to catch on sometimes. But not my Boss Farmer, thank goodness. He's on to all the new tricks . . . as soon as I am lots of times.

BAKER: LAUGHS

BEULAH: That's why I'm not worrying too much about my personal feed situation. We've got a lot of wonderful grass and alfalfa and clover on this place this year . . . and I'll bet Boss Farmer will make the most of it.

BAKER: What do you think he'll do, Beulah?

BEULAH: Well . . . I think he'll concentrate on handling our hay crops to get the most protein out of 'em . . . something like you handle your vegetables to get the most vitamins.

BAKER: (CHUCKLES) Are you trying to kid me, Beulah . . . next thing you'll be telling me you want your alfalfa cooked just 12 minutes in a small amount of water.

BEULAH: Oh, sticks and straw! You know what I mean . . . the new ways science says you ought to handle hay to save food values. It's exactly the same principle as handling your food . . . except you eat kale and spinach . . . the nasty stuff . . . and I eat clover and alfalfa.

BAKER: I'm listening . . . go ahead . . .

BEULAH: Well . . . take this alfalfa we're standing in . . .

BAKER: Yes . . .

BEULAH: Well, if Boss Farmer cuts this alfalfa for hay, he'll probably do it when the blooms are about a quarter of the way open . . .

BAKER: Not wait for the full bloom?

BEULAH: No . . . because the scientists have found out . . . and my Boss knows it . . . that legume hay cut at the quarter-bloom stage has from 10 to 15 percent more protein in it than legume hay that isn't cut until it's in full bloom.

BAKER: A foxy pair . . . you and your Boss Farmer.

BEULAH: We get by, Boy . . . we get by. Now, the same thing's true of timothy or brome or other grass hay. If you cut grass, when the heads are just beginning to show, there'll be from 10 to 15 percent more protein in it . . . when I eat it.

BAKER: And with a feed shortage on, 10 to 15 percent more protein is certainly important to a milk cow . . .

BEULAH: You bet your best milkstool it is. Another thing my Boss Farmer is interested in . . . and he's strong for this . . . is the business of making alfalfa into silage . . . not hay, but green silage.

BAKER: You get more protein that way?

BEULAH: Yes . . . considerably more. Which means more milk. And you get more caroteen, which means more Vitamin A for my milk and butter. (WARMS UP) One of those brasshat scientists of yours at the Department of Agriculture says dairy farmers can go a long way toward meeting the protein shortage this year by working for high-quality hay . . . or making silage if conditions aren't good for making hay . . .

BAKER: That would be Dr. Hodgson, I expect . . .

BEULAH: Well, whoever he is, I think he's right.

BAKER: I know there's a lot of interest nowadays in making green silage instead of putting up hay. For one thing, it's less work, and help is still scarce on farms . . .

BEULAH: My Boss Farmer likes the idea. After molasses got so high, and phosphoric acid so scarce, he began to use the wilting system . . .

BAKER: So he wouldn't have to use any preservatives . . .

BEULAH: Yes . . . the trick is to get the moisture content just right. If it's too high, the grass will have a lot of juice and the silage will come out stinking to high heaven . . . I just can't eat the stuff.

BAKER: How does your Boss Farmer tell about the moisture?

BEULAH: At first he borrowed a moisture tester . . . a homemade affair, I think. But after while, he got so good, he could pick up a handful of the chopped grass and aqueeze it and tell that way.

BAKER: So-o-o-o?

BEULAH: If the squeezed handful of grass springs back slowly and breaks apart slowly, the moisture content is just about right . . . from 65 to 68 percent.

BAKER: Then you think this grass silage is really good stuff to milk high on?

BEULAH: You bet it is . . . there were some tests this past year. The cows fed on green silage through the winter' actually produced over 7 percent more milk than the girls who got only field-cured hay. Forty percent of our feeding is winter feeding you know.

BAKER: Seven percent more milk . . . then, evidently the field-cured hay loses food value somewhere along the line, in the curing and storing processes . . . and that doesn't happen to grass silage.

BEULAH: Seems that way . . . it's exposure to the sun and weather, I think. You know, Boy, most smart cows could tell you that, anyway. There's just something in early grass . . . whether you eat it here in the pasture or get it out of the silo . . . that puts pep into us Old Girls. Makes us give more milk . . . makes for better calves . . . I can't tell you what it is, but I can certainly feel it.

BAKER: Beulah . . . my! my!

BEULAH: If my Boss Farmer puts up enough grass silage this year to take the girls on this place through next winter, I'm not going to worry too much about milk production falling off for lack of grain . . . let the hungry people have the grain . . . we cows 'll go heavy on grass.

BAKER: Think you'll pull it off all right . . .

BEULAH: I'm sure of it . . .

BAKER: Well . . . I hope Boss Farmer comes through, Beulah, with plenty of good hay and grass silage. This is certainly a year when people need the grain . . .

BEULAH: I think we can depend on Boss Farmer . . . we usually can.

BAKER: You're a lucky old Cow, Beulah. Well . . . so long . . . Happy Grazing.

BEULAH: So long, Boy (FADING) Glad you came. FAINT BELL TINKLE

BAKER: FADES WHISTLING "MILK MAN KEEP THOSE BOTTLES QUIET"

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